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**Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)**

**Summary record of the 9th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 9 October 2002, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Maitland ..... (South Africa)

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Agenda item 75: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 75: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space** (*continued*) (A/57/20 and A/57/213; A/C.4/57/L.5)

1. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) said that, over the past four decades, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had recorded a number of significant achievements in promoting international space cooperation. However, the Committee was not, and must not become, one of the multilateral mechanisms in which disarmament issues were discussed. It had been established by General Assembly resolution 1348 (XIII) of 13 December 1958 as the Assembly's only standing body for the consideration of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. There were such forums as the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the disarmament aspects of outer space.

2. The Committee had played a notable role in advancing space cooperation and provided a unique opportunity for the exchange of information among developed and developing countries on the latest developments in the use and exploration of outer space. In his delegation's view, there were tangible opportunities to enhance international cooperation in line with the Committee's mandate.

3. The recent sessions of the Committee and its subcommittees were a clear example. His delegation was particularly encouraged by the substantial progress made in the work of the action teams established to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). There had been an extremely interesting exchange of views on the spin-off benefits of space exploration and the strengthening of the role of the Committee in promoting international cooperation to ensure that outer space was maintained for peaceful purposes. His delegation was also pleased to note that the Committee had considered a new item entitled "Space and society", as well as international cooperation in the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (COSPAS-SARSAT), which was marking its twentieth anniversary in 2002. During that period, COSPAS-SARSAT had defined the technical characteristics of emergency beacons to help ensure the use of one common standard worldwide; its space segment had been expanded to include instruments in the geostationary orbit, which now provided almost instantaneous alerts; the programme's membership had been expanded and now included 34 States in all regions of the world.

4. His delegation noted, in particular, the successes of the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, especially its work on launch approval processes for space nuclear systems and on potential practical applications of that technology in the future.

5. Another priority topic for his delegation was space debris. It was pleased to note that the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee had reached a consensus on proposed debris mitigation guidelines.

6. The work of the Legal Subcommittee in the field of space law had been extraordinarily successful. Much of that success was due to its ability to focus on practical problems and its efforts to address any such problems through a consensus-based and results-oriented approach. At its recent session, the Subcommittee had, inter alia, completed the multi-year work plan for the review of the concept of the "launching state"; the related report (A/AC.105/768) deserved special praise. The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (the Outer Space Treaty), which was marking its thirty-fifth anniversary in 2002, had stood the test of time; its provisions had lost none of their importance and relevance. Taking into account the recent significant increase in the scale of commercial use of outer space, the progress made in the work on the draft protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on matters specific to space assets seemed promising.

7. At the recent session of the Legal Subcommittee, his delegation had emphasized that all States must focus on the domestic implementation of the outer space treaties. In that connection, the United States had taken a number of measures to upgrade its national registry of space objects so that it was accessible on the Internet and could be updated electronically. It had also taken measures to clarify the domestic criteria for including space objects in the national register. That step was intended to ensure that both domestic and

foreign owners and operators of space objects had a clear understanding of the circumstances in which space objects were or were not registered by the United States.

8. Other States should take measures to clarify their registration practice in a similar manner; that would improve overall international practice, which would be to the benefit of all. The promotion of increased international cooperation in the registration of space objects might be an appropriate area of activity for the Legal Subcommittee and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs.

9. **Mr. Fallouh** (Syrian Arab Republic) noted the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and the resolutions and recommendations on ways and means of ensuring full participation by developing countries in the exploration and use of outer space.

10. The flight by a Syrian astronaut and the establishment of a national body on remote sensing of the Earth demonstrated the importance that the Syrian Arab Republic attached to its participation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

11. His delegation noted the generally positive international trends in the peaceful uses of outer space, particularly in connection with the enhancement of the economic and humanitarian situation in developing countries. A peaceful cosmos required that the efforts of the international community to stop the illicit use of outer space, prevent its militarization and avert an arms race in space should be based on clear legal mandates, concepts and documents, which should be elaborated on a continuous basis.

12. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by some countries to reduce spending on military space activities and to use the savings for development and environmental protection and to seek solutions to serious global economic, environmental and health problems. However, it noted with alarm the continued implementation of some programmes that were leading to the militarization of outer space the goals of which were incompatible with international peace and development.

13. He noted that, in order to avoid collisions, more attention should be paid to the problem of space debris, particularly where spacecraft equipped with nuclear power sources or having nuclear components were concerned. Countries that had satellites with nuclear units on board had a special responsibility to provide sufficiently full information on their satellites, the refuelling methods, the composition of their components and the safety measures in place.

14. Concerning the enlargement of the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, his delegation supported the applications of Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to become members of the Committee.

15. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the accomplishment of the goals set and the implementation of the resolutions and principles adopted would lead to the enhancement of efforts in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space and contribute to the strengthening of stability, peace and justice throughout the world.

16. **Mr. Elashi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should be given due credit for the work it had done, which was reflected in its report. Outer space and the peaceful uses of outer space were of great interest to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, given the enormous importance, particularly for developing countries, of utilizing outer space for socio-economic development, the improvement of the communications infrastructure, early warning systems, environmental protection and the exploitation of natural resources. In that connection, there was a need to initiate cooperation, within the United Nations system, in the application of space technologies and scientific know-how that could help to eliminate the obstacles to sustainable development.

17. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had been following achievements in space science for more than 10 years. It had opened a remote sensing centre to address various problems, including desertification and the depletion of unconfined groundwater. The scientific methods and technologies developed were made available to international and regional organizations.

18. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had applied to participate in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and trusted that its application would receive favourable consideration. Should it became a member of the Committee, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya would contribute to the

strengthening of the role of the African countries. In addition, that would enable geographical balance to be re-established within the Committee's membership.

19. With regard to the issue of an arms race in space, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya considered outer space to be a common good, which should therefore be used in the interests of all humankind, for its development and prosperity. It called on all States Members of the United Nations to adopt such conventions and laws as would preclude the use of outer space for military purposes.

20. **Mr. Su** Wei (China) said that, at its forty-fifth session, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had discussed, as a priority item, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. His Government had always considered that the development and use of outer space should fully serve the cause of peace, and it believed that there was a need to conclude binding international instruments on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

21. At the recent session of the Committee, there had been serious and in-depth discussion of the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets. His delegation believed that the proposed space asset financing, collateral and guarantee system should be based on the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty. It supported the continuation of deliberations on that item and the conduct of an in-depth study on the specific approaches to reconciling the draft protocol and the currently applicable space law.

22. His delegation valued highly the support provided by the countries concerned and by international organizations to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which made a useful contribution to the promotion and coordination of space activities. In addition, his Government attached great importance to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. China, which had presided for one year over the action team responsible for natural disaster reduction and management, had worked effectively with Canada and France on the implementation of the action plan.

23. Concerning the achievements in China's aeronautical industry over the past year, he said that, on 25 March 2002, China had launched the unmanned spacecraft Shenzhou 3, which had returned successfully to Earth on 1 April 2002. The planned experiments had been completed, marking a sound step forward in the field of manned space technology. On 15 May 2002, the carrier rocket Long March-4B had been successfully launched, sending two satellites into orbit simultaneously: China's first oceanographic satellite Haiyang-1 and the meteorological satellite Fengyun-1D. The launch had been the sixty-seventh using carrier rockets of the Long March series and the thirteenth successful launch of two satellites using one rocket. Since 1996, there had been 25 launches of such rockets, the safety and reliability of which had reached world-class standards.

24. Currently, satellites of various kinds developed by China were being widely used in such fields as the economy, science and technology, culture and defence, generating social and economic benefits. In order to promote sustainable development, his Government had incorporated space technology in the national development strategy.

25. China, which was committed to the idea that international cooperation in outer space should be based on mutual benefit and mutual complementarity, had concluded intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements with many countries. On 1 January 2002, his Government had formally established the Multilateral Space Cooperation Secretariat for the Asia and Pacific Region. It would continue to expand its cooperation in outer space matters.

26. **Ms. Olivera** (Mexico) said that the appropriate use of outer space opened up many possibilities for furthering human development and overcoming key problems in various fields. The members of the international community should take a responsible approach to that task and, in addressing it, should make maximum use of the existing coordination bodies and mechanisms. She noted that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees continued to analyse the implementation of measures to improve the communications infrastructure, education, agriculture, environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources in the interests of human development.

27. In her delegation's view, UNISPACE III gave the Committee an opportunity to reorient its activities in the light of the important international commitments entered into by Member States in recent years. First and foremost, there was a need for active efforts to

ensure that achievements in the fields of space science and technology furthered the successful and comprehensive attainment of the goals of such major United Nations conferences as the Millennium Summit, the Doha Ministerial Conference, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. She expressed satisfaction at the first steps taken by the Committee, the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities towards addressing those ambitious tasks. The Committee's efforts should be directed towards the implementation of practical measures to promote the formation of stable societies, for example, by solving environmental problems, preventing natural disasters, remedying the shortage of water resources, foodstuffs and energy, and developing the education system.

28. Her delegation, which was fully prepared to participate in the work of the Committee and to cooperate with the relevant United Nations bodies, was making an active contribution to the work of the action teams on a worldwide environmental monitoring strategy and on the rational use of natural resources.

29. In her delegation's view, regional cooperation in science and technology played an important role in, and made a substantial contribution to, the work of the Committee. In that connection, she noted the successful conduct of the fourth Pan-American Space Conference, the main outcome of which had been the adoption of a recommendation on the establishment of a regional coordination mechanism for space affairs, which was called on to facilitate the creation of a regional agency for expanding mutual assistance and coordination among the countries of the region in space science and technology. The Conference had also adopted a plan of action for the development of cooperation and coordination among regional programmes and projects.

30. She signalled, as a special achievement, the establishment of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, the board of governors of which, at its meetings in 2002 in Mexico and Brazil, had adopted important decisions on the composition and functioning of the leadership of the Centre's departments in both countries and had approved an agreement on the headquarters of the Centre.

31. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5 on the item under consideration. He announced that there would be a brief suspension to give members of the Committee time to familiarize themselves with the text of the draft resolution, which had only just been circulated.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.*

32. **The Chairman** suggested that, since the draft resolution had already been considered for two days in a working group, the members of the Committee should not, in the current instance, apply rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and should take action on the draft resolution at the current meeting.

33. *It was so decided.*

34. **Mr. Gonzalez Aninat** (Chile) introduced draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5 on the item under consideration. Noting that the text of the draft resolution was very similar to that of the previous year's resolution, he explained the differences between the two texts.

35. In the preamble, a few words had been added to stress the importance of article IV of the Outer Space Treaty. Paragraphs 3 to 11, 15 to 21 and 42 to 46 reflected the recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space concerning its own work and that of its subcommittees in 2003. Paragraph 26 called on Member States to provide full support to the action teams established by the Committee to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. Paragraph 28 referred to the preparations that the Committee had initiated for the review by the General Assembly in 2004 of the progress made in the implementing those recommendations, while paragraph 29 reflected the agreement that a separate item devoted to that review should be included in the agenda of the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

36. Paragraph 38 urged entities of the United Nations system to examine how space science and technology could contribute to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Paragraph 45 recognized the achievements of COSPAS-SARSAT.

37. Paragraphs 12 to 14 concerned the composition of the bureaux of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies. Paragraph 41 reflected the Committee's decision to grant observer status to additional organizations. Paragraphs 39

and 40 reflected the agreement reached on the membership of the Committee. He thanked all those who had contributed to the formulation of the latter two paragraphs.

38. He expressed the hope that, in accordance with established practice, the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

39. **The Chairman** announced that he had been informed by the Secretariat that the adoption of the draft resolution would have no programme budget implications.

40. **Mr. Assaf** (Lebanon) noted that, in the Arabic version of draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5, paragraphs 38 to 46 had been printed twice, while paragraphs 47 to 49 were missing.

41. **Mr. Brosseau** (France) pointed out that, in the French version of the document, in the third line of the second preambular paragraph, the word "*patrimoine*" was used, whereas the word "*apanage*" should have been used, as in article I of the Outer Space Treaty.

42. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised, without a vote.

43. *Draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5, as orally revised, was adopted.*

44. **Mr. Yahya** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) congratulated Algeria on becoming a member of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. There had been only one vacancy in the Committee, but there was not and could not be any rivalry between Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya would, in any case, have made way for fraternal Algeria.

45. His delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, but it was not entirely satisfied with the formulation of paragraph 40. It was to be hoped that, in 2004, a positive decision would be reached on the issue of the membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Committee.

46. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria) thanked all those who had supported Algeria's becoming a member of the Committee. His delegation would strive to make a useful contribution to the work of the Committee. It considered that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya should also become a member of the Committee and would continue to support it in its efforts to that end.

47. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of the item.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*